

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 3 and 7 are amended, and claims 18-20 are added. Claims 1 and 11 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 2-4, 6, 12, 13, and 15-17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. However, claims 2-4, 6, 12, 13, and 15-17 have not been rewritten in independent form at this time, since it is believed that independent claim 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance in view of the fact that Toyoda (U.S. 6,691,814) has been disqualified as prior art by the submission of verified English translation of priority documents JP 2003-043076 (filed on February 26, 2003), and JP 2003-049798 (filed on February 26, 2003).

Claim for Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged the Applicant's claim for foreign priority based on JP 2003-043076 (filed on February 26, 2003), and JP 2003-049798 (filed on February 26, 2003).

Information Disclosure Citation

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed May 18, 2005, and for providing the Applicant with an initialed copy of the PTO form filed therewith.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has made the Restriction Requirement final, and has withdrawn claims 7-11 from further consideration. By this Amendment, the Applicant has amended claim 7 to depend from independent claim 1, and has added claim 18 depending from independent claim 11.

When independent claims 1 and 11 are found to be allowable, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider withdrawn claims 7-11 and added claims 18-20, since these claims are subcombinations of claims 1 and 11, respectively.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 3 because of an informality. In order to overcome this objection, the Applicant has amended claim 3 in order to address the issue pointed out by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1, 5, 11, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Toyoda (U.S. 6,691,814). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In response, the Applicant has attached Verified English translation of JP 2003-043076 (filed on February 26, 2003), and JP 2003-049798 (filed on February 26, 2003), each of which has a filing date prior to the Foreign Application Priority Date of March 19, 2003 of Toyoda.

Therefore, Toyoda is disqualified as prior art in the rejection of the claims of the present invention.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claims 1 and 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including

Therefore, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) are respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims

The Examiner will note that dependent claim 3 has been amended, and dependent claims 18-20 have been added to set forth additional novel features of the invention.

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

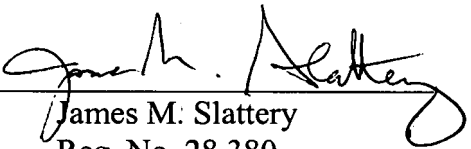
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030 (direct line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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